

Proposed Neighborhoods Element - Introduction

Future Vision for Redmond – Neighborhoods

In 2022, Redmond citizens describe their community as one that is complete, offering a wide range of services, opportunities, and amenities. It's a community that has gracefully accommodated growth and change while ensuring that Redmond's high quality of life, cherished natural features, distinct places, and character are not overwhelmed. It's a place where people are friendly, diversity and innovation are embraced, and action is taken to achieve community objectives. It's a place that is home to people from a variety of ethnic backgrounds, which contribute to the richness of the city's culture.

Achieving a balance between accommodating growth and preserving Redmond's unique features and livability has been challenging, but over the past 20 years through the clear, shared direction contained in the Comprehensive Plan, the vision has taken shape, and throughout Redmond the results are apparent.

Many citizens continue to actively participate in Redmond's planning process and system improvements, and their preferences are incorporated so that Redmond continues to be the community desired by its citizens.

In 2022, as in 2003, Redmond is a community of good neighbors.

Organization of this Element

Introduction

- A. Planning for Neighborhoods
- B. Carrying Out Neighborhood Plans
- C.-K. Neighborhood Policies for Redmond's Neighborhoods

Introduction

The Neighborhoods Element contains neighborhood-specific policies. The overall goal of neighborhood plans is to enhance the quality of life for all who live or work in Redmond's neighborhoods. Neighborhood planning uses the City's overall policies, neighborhood issues, and neighborhood opportunities to develop solutions that take advantage of opportunities and address problems. The other Comprehensive Plan Elements, for example, Transportation, Housing, and Utilities, address these topics citywide; the Neighborhoods Element addresses these issues in a neighborhood-specific manner. The Neighborhoods Element is coordinated with other elements to ensure that policies are not duplicated. In addition to the neighborhood policies in this Element, the Downtown Element includes policies applicable to the Downtown Neighborhood.

Figure N-1 illustrates the neighborhood planning and update process and the relationship of neighborhood plans to the Comprehensive Plan. The neighborhood planning and update process gives neighborhoods the opportunity to develop or refine neighborhood policies to fit community circumstances while meeting citywide objectives.

Figure N-1

Neighborhood planning has the following benefits:

- Working at the neighborhood level, City staff are able to develop and respond to a comprehensive inventory of neighborhood specific issues and concerns.
- Addressing neighborhood problems and recognizing, enhancing, and maintaining neighborhood opportunities helps improve neighborhoods.
- Neighborhood-specific policies can help residents retain or strengthen a sense of place; that is, a combination of character, setting, land uses, and environment that makes a neighborhood unique.
- Neighborhood planning efforts bring together those who live, work, or own property in the neighborhood to address neighborhood concerns and goals jointly.
- Neighborhood planning brings together residents and City staff and officials, contributing to a stronger community.
- Two-way communication is enhanced among the neighborhood, the City staff, the Planning Commission, and City Council so that information and ideas may be shared between the groups.
- Opportunities and barriers to implementing citywide policies are identified and addressed, enhancing the effectiveness of citywide planning.
- Policies developed on a neighborhood level may inspire efforts for the entire City, improving planning and implementation citywide.

By addressing neighborhood problems and drawing on the desirable attributes of neighborhoods, the Neighborhoods Element works to enhance Redmond's quality of life. For example, neighborhood traffic management and land use policies help provide for efficient development while minimizing land use conflicts and adverse impacts on neighboring uses.

The citywide vision and policies describe an overall preferred growth strategy for Redmond, while the Neighborhoods Element establishes a specific vision and policies for each neighborhood. The neighborhood policies are consistent with the citywide framework, as required by the Growth Management Act. Fulfilling each neighborhood vision will collectively achieve the citywide vision. For example, the citywide policies call for creating opportunities within Redmond to provide a diversity of housing types at a range of prices, including affordable homes. The neighborhood policies identify the desired qualities of each residential neighborhood and the neighborhood's strategies for promoting innovative and affordable housing within the neighborhood.

A. Planning for Neighborhoods

Redmond's substantial residential and employment growth has increased the complexity of opportunities and issues the City faces. While many of these opportunities and issues can be effectively addressed at a citywide level, others need more specific solutions. This section includes policies that will guide the preparation, review, and update of neighborhood plans. Redmond's neighborhoods are shown on Map N-1. These areas form the boundaries for the neighborhood plans, based on geography, the transportation network, and land use; they are utilized for planning purposes only.

Map N-1

Preparation and Coordination of Neighborhood Plans and Updates

Since the preparation and adoption of a neighborhood plan is typically an extended process, preparation of plans for different neighborhoods must be staggered to minimize costs and utilize staff effectively. The timing of the preparation of a plan for a given neighborhood will be based on the urgency of the issues, opportunities that need to be addressed, and the level of growth facing each neighborhood.

To be effective, plans must be current. Neighborhood plans will be periodically reviewed in anticipation of and during periods of growth. Based on that review, the City may decide that the plan does not require any changes, that limited updating is needed, or that the neighborhood plan should be redone.

NP-1 Prepare or update neighborhood plans every six years, and include a review of neighborhood plans to determine if they are adequate or require updating. Work with neighborhood representatives and the Planning Commission to prepare a recommendation on priority neighborhoods for consideration by the City Council.

After being developed, each neighborhood plan will be reviewed by the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission will conduct a public hearing on the plan and make a recommendation to the City Council. The City Council will then consider adoption of the plan, after modification if needed, and incorporate it into the Neighborhood Element.

Maximum public input is essential for the preparation of, update to, and review of a neighborhood plan. At key milestones throughout the neighborhood planning and update process, staff emphasizes involvement from the community using a variety of methods such as direct mailing, web announcements, flyers, and through other existing communication networks, such as home owners associations and faith based communities.

Public involvement may also be pursued by using existing neighborhood organizations as advisory groups, conducting neighborhood surveys, or holding workshops. The techniques selected should be appropriate to the planning effort and the community while providing a fair and equal opportunity for all who live, work, and own property within the neighborhood to participate.

- NP-2 Maximize public input to neighborhood plans through the guidance of a citizen advisory committee or other representative group composed of people who live, work, own property, or own a business in the neighborhood. Ensure that neighborhood residents, businesses, and property owners always have the opportunity to be involved in the review, preparation, and adoption of neighborhood plans. Use techniques appropriate to the neighborhood and to the issues under consideration, and involve affected City departments, boards, and advisory committees in the update and review of neighborhood plans.

Techniques and Structure of the Neighborhood Plan Update Process

Redmond's neighborhoods are unique and each neighborhood plan will address different issues and opportunities. However, to ensure that plans are consistent with the citywide Comprehensive Plan and that appropriate problems and opportunities are addressed, each plan should consider a common set of issues and opportunities.

One such consideration is neighborhood character. Neighborhood character refers to the overall sense of a neighborhood. It evolves over time and results from the interaction of a variety of factors. Those factors include the appearance of the neighborhood, such as the buildings, landscaping and streets; the types of land uses; natural features and open space; and other focal points such as schools, churches, parks, and neighborhood businesses.

Staff will utilize a variety of techniques with the neighborhoods so that they equally understand the issues and opportunities, in order to establish a common knowledge base for all involved. From this base knowledge, recommendations will evolve.

- NP-3 Address issues and opportunities in preparing neighborhood plans and updates such as:
- Implementing the citywide Comprehensive Plan;
 - Establishing a long range vision for the neighborhood;
 - Coordinating neighborhood communication;
 - Reviewing neighborhood boundaries,
 - Preserving the natural environment;
 - Promoting parks, recreation, open space, and cultural arts, especially those that address local neighborhood needs;
 - Identifying community facilities and services;
 - Encouraging provision of housing to serve people of a diversity of income levels, ages, family sizes, and special needs;
 - Supporting commercial uses, when appropriately sited;
 - Establishing and enhancing neighborhood character and design issues such as identification and enhancement of formal and informal neighborhood gathering places, and identification and enhancement of neighborhood gateways;
 - Conserving and improving historic, archaeological, or cultural sites;
 - Supporting neighborhood transportation needs including strategies to improve transportation connections, encourage use of alternative travel modes, and manage traffic; addressing modes of transportation such as walking, bicycling, transit, and personal motor vehicle;
 - Identifying and reporting other issues and opportunities raised by neighborhood residents, businesses, property owners, and other interested groups and individuals; and

- Developing a list of priority projects based on recommendation by neighborhood representatives.

The weight given to each of these areas will vary with its significance to the neighborhood.

While each neighborhood will require individual solutions and have individual opportunities, a “tool kit” of solutions forms the starting point that can be applied to neighborhoods, reducing planning costs and easing implementation. The tool kit includes planning techniques, zoning techniques, traffic calming methods, design standards, and other implementation measures. While these tools should be customized to fit the neighborhood, they must also be consistent with the citywide Comprehensive Plan and Community Development Guide, and be economical to administer. Over time, new tools will be added to the tool kit.

- NP-4 Identify techniques and methods that can be used to address neighborhood issues and opportunities. Choose solutions that are compatible with the City’s Comprehensive Plan and development regulations.
- NP-5 Update policy and development regulations necessary for a neighborhood plan concurrently to enable the Planning Commission and City Council to review and amend both the policies and development regulations at the same time.

B. Implementing Neighborhood Plans

Once a neighborhood plan is prepared and adopted, it must be implemented. Neighborhood plans will be implemented through coordination among City staff, programs and policies carried out by City departments, and by applying neighborhood policies and regulations to specific developments through land use reviews. Examples of situations in which related neighborhood policies and implementing regulations would be applied include proposed Comprehensive Plan amendments, rezones, subdivisions, site plan entitlements, SEPA reviews, certain building permits, and similar permits and approvals.

- NP-6 Implement the neighborhood plans’ vision, policies, and improvements by:
- Using discretionary land use reviews;
 - Identifying capital facility improvements needed in a neighborhood and ways of funding them;
 - Providing follow up communication among interested parties and the members of the neighborhood;
 - Offering the Neighborhood Spotlight Fund to complete appropriate projects; and
 - Using other implementing measures.

Initial Neighborhood Improvements

The neighborhood planning and update process provides an opportunity to identify small capital improvements of particular importance to the neighborhood that can be completed through the Neighborhood Spotlight Fund. Projects for consideration may include a trail connection, streetlights,

signs, or a park improvement. Examples of smaller, non-capital projects that could be considered for assistance through the Neighborhood Matching Fund include a workshop event that promotes the goals and vision of the final plan or a neighborhood parade float for festivals such as Derby Days.

- NP-7 Work with neighborhood representatives to recommend projects for inclusion in the priority projects list. Give deference to neighborhood recommendations provided projects are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and in compliance with safety standards set by the City. Periodically review the priority project list with neighborhood representatives, City staff, and officials in order to determine priority and feasibility. If conflicts occur, neighborhood policies take precedence over the general policies in the other Comprehensive Plan elements.
- NP-8 Identify and implement one or more small neighborhood projects to respond to specific issues identified during the planning process. Work together with representatives of the neighborhood in order to ensure the completion of the projects in a timely manner.

Process and Planning Review

Ongoing review of the plan, assessment of the planning process, and evaluation of the tools utilized allow staff and residents to examine and improve the neighborhood update procedure. The review serves as a check-in period with the neighborhood residents during which new ideas and issues are presented, in addition to an examination of the steps taken to promote plan implementation. Methods for assessment will be designed to meet the specific needs of the neighborhood. For example, communication may continue through public sessions and surveys with citizen advisory group members and other representatives of the neighborhood. Review also occurs at the staff level to ensure that best management practices continue to be utilized and methods improve as identified.

Key milestones provide opportunities for feedback from the residents of a neighborhood. At those times, notification of a survey, workshop, open house, or other collaborative effort is provided in an effort to bridge the interests and issues reflected by City staff and officials, the neighborhood representatives, and neighborhood residents. Milestones include but are not limited to:

- Announcement of the neighborhood planning and update process, and recruitment of neighborhood representatives;
- Presentations of the initial identification of issues and opportunities regarding the neighborhood;
- The formal development of a neighborhood vision which includes the long range ideas and concerns for the neighborhood in its entirety; and
- The development of recommendations by the neighborhood representatives, which are the basis for the creation of neighborhood policies within the neighborhood plan, as part of the Comprehensive Plan.

- NP-9 Utilize all reasonable measures of communication with the neighborhood and neighborhood representatives throughout the neighborhood planning and update process. Periodically review and evaluate the neighborhood plan update process in order to improve the planning process and to strengthen communication between City staff and officials and neighborhoods through:

- Updating of current issues and feedback regarding the neighborhood planning and update process by representative groups within the neighborhood;
- Coordination among the Strategic Neighborhoods Team which is comprised of staff from City departments and divisions, for the purpose of ongoing contact with the neighborhood, providing continued support throughout the plan update, and developing future enhancements to the update process;
- Maintenance and enhancement of communication strategies to achieve an active network for reporting and feedback between City staff and officials and the neighborhood; and
- Identification and recruitment of neighborhood representatives and organizational contacts to provide ongoing maintenance of the neighborhood plan, to offer feedback to City staff and officials, and to remain informed of City projects and processes.